JAZZ INFORMATION

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JAZZ ON THE AIR

COMPLETE RECORD REVIEWS
RECORD COLLECTORS ITEMS
UNPUBLISHED PHOTOGRAPHS

News and Other Features

VOLUME TWO NUMBER TWO
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AUG. 9, 1940

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The first complete discography of Ma Rainey.

The third in a series of biographies of New Orleans clarinets: Albert Nicholas.

A "Safety Valve" column by George M. Avakian.

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NEW YORK CITY

JAZZ INFORMATION

VOLUME II, NUMBER 2 AUGUST 9, 1940

HRS RECORDS STEWART, BIGARD

A seven-piece pick-up band led by Rex Stewart recorded four 12-inch sides on July 24 for the Hot Record Society's Original label.

The records, issued this week, are "Diga Diga Do" -- Cherry" and "Solid -- Bugle Call Rag", both under the name of Rex Stewart's Big Seven.

Besides Rex on trumpet, the band included two other Ellingtonians, Lawrence Brown on trombone and Barney Bigard, clarinet. Wellman Braud, formerly with Duke, played bass and the guitarist was Brick Fleagle, white arranger who has recorded with Duke on occasion. Non Ellingtonians on the session were pianist Billy Kyle of John Kirby's orchestra and drummer Dave Tough.

NEW "HOT DISCOGRAPHY" READY SOON

The new revised edition of Delaunay's "Hot Discography", being published by the Commodore Music Shops, will be ready by the end of August, Milt Gabler announces.

Discography, the most complete index of hot jazz records and their personnels, has been out of print for some time. For the new edition, to be bound in cloth covers, over two hundred pages have been corrected. A new listing of privately issued hot records is included.

HARLEM APOLLO THEATRE CLOSED

Harlem's famous Apollo Theatre closed its doors last month. For years the Apollo's stage shows featuring the finest colored name bands, drew crowds from uptown and downtown. The Apollo management is now presenting a similar policy at the Harlem Opera House, a few doors east of the Apollo.

HODES, CLESS WAX FOR NEW LABEL

A new private record label, appearing this week, will feature the playing of Art Hodes and Rod Cless, well known Chicago musicians now in this city.

With bass-player Jimmy Butts, Hodes and Cless recorded "Four Or Five Times" and "I've Found A New Baby" for Signature, new label introduced by Bob Thiele, collector and musician of Forest Hills, N.Y. The record will be released under the name of Art Hodes' Blue Three.

Hodes, famed as the best white blues pianist, is known to collectors through two piano solos on Solo Art Records. Cless, closest follower of Frank Teschemacher's clarinet style, who has been called the finest white clarinet alive, has recorded previously with Muggsy Spanier on Bluebird. Butts plays bass in Chris Columbus' band.

Two more sides by the same trio, "Tin Roof Blues" and "Diga Diga Doo", are to be released shortly.

COMMODORE RELEASES THREE DISCS

The Commodore Music Shops have released three new records on their private "Classics in Swing" label.

Two of the new releases are by the "Chocolate Dandies", an all-star group including Roy Eldridge, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, John Kirby, Bernard Addison and Sidney Catlett. This band recorded two twelve-inch sides, "I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me" and "I Surrender Dear", as well as two ten-inchers, "Smack" and "Dedication".

Released at the same time were two piano solos by Joe Bushkin, now playing with Tommy Dorsey's orchestra: "I Can't Get Started" and "Serenade In Thirds".

New York

According to reports from the Pacific Coast, the ballroom business is booming there, with five new spots opening. Tommy Dorsey is set to open Lou Brecker's new Playdium in Hollywood on October 15; Jimmie Lunceford opens at the Casa Manana, Southgate, about the same time. Other new ballrooms are the Palomar (rebuilt) and the Glendale Auditorium.

Joe Marsala remains at the Hickory, with Tuesday relief bands often featuring Dave Tough. Zutty Singleton's trio remains at the Village Vanguard; Teddy Wilson at Cafe Society, Eldridge and Holiday at Kelly's Stable. Woody Herman's opening at the Hotel New Yorker was yesterday.

Buddy Johnson's Band, now at The Place in Greenwich Village, has Gus McClong, trumpet; Kenneth Hollon, tenor; Johnson, piano; Frank Clark, bass; and Jones, drums.

Edgar Hayes' orchestra, now rehearsing, has the following personnel: Leonard Davis, Ermett Perry, Henry Goodwin, trumpets; Clyde Barnhard, Redus Horton, and Moran, trombones; Garvin Buschell, Benny Williams, Bingie Madison and Don Bias, reeds; Hayes, piano; Wellman Braud, bass. Drummer and guitarist in the new line-up were not set.

Harry Jaeger, trumpet with Red Nichols, will leave Red soon to join Ben Pollack. Al King, former Freddy Martin trumpeter, will join the Bob Crosby orchestra at Catalina. Dave Bowman, ex-Bud Freeman pianist, has joined Jack Teagarden's orchestra, replacing Nat Jaffe.

Freeman himself is rehearsing a new eleven-piece outfit, with Irving Goodman and Jerry Neary, trumpets, Dave Tough, drums, Bill Clifton, piano, Mort Stuhlmaker, bass, and others.

Pianist Jackie Rusin is now with Alvino Rey's sweet-swing band, and Frank Suttle replaced Eddie Jenkins on drums.

Harry James opened at the Dancing Campus at the World's Fair on July 20, for a month. Al Lerner replaced Jack Gardner on piano, and Sam Donahue, tenor, was added. James will play a week at the Palisades Amusement Park August 20 to 26.

J. Russell Robinson, pianist in the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and co-author of "Eccentric", has rejoined the publishing firm of W. C. Handy.

Mike McKendrick, well-known Chicago guitarist, is at the Columbia Restaurant, 103rd St. and Broadway, with another guitar and a bass.

Willie Gant's trio, with Happy Cauldwell and Alphonse Steele, left the Brittwood for the Moonglow on July 27th. Continuing at the Victoria is Kaiser Marshall; Louis Jordan ditto at the Elks.

Claude Hopkins is now on a tour of theatres and one-night stands, with a line-up including Albert Snaer, Renald Johes, Herman Autrey, trumpets; Ray Hogan, Norman Green, Bernie Archer, trombones; Howard

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Johnson, clarinet and alto; Norman Thornton, alto; Bobby Sands, Benny Waters, tenors; Walter Jones, guitar; Elmer James, bass; Walter Johnson, drums.

Mel Powell is now playing relief piano at Nick's, where the Condon all-star band and the Spirits of Rhythm continue.

Sidney Bechet will play at the Enduro Restaurant, Flatbush and De Kalb Avenues in Brooklyn, on Monday nights beginning this week. Bechet is using a five-piece band, with Sidney De Paris on trumpet.

Albert Socarras, Cuban leader, is playing relief sets at the Glen Island Casino, where he is set for fifteen months. The band includes Gus Akins, trumpet, and Cecil Scott, tenor. Socarras doubles on a number of instruments, including flute and clarinet.

After he returned from a tour with Bud Freeman's band, Hot Lips Page was last heard of rehearsing the following band: Billy Bowen, Claude "Horsecollar" Williams, altos; Elbert "Skippy" Williams, tenor; Jimmy Reynolds, piano; Herbie Thomas, guitar; Abe Bolar, bass; Shedrich "Guts" Dobson, drums.

Billy Butterfield, ex-Crosby trumpet player, is now with Artie Shaw on the Coast. Shaw follows Henry Busse into the Palace Hotel, San Francisco, on September 2.

The Harlem Tattler, recently revived uptown fortnightly, has a regular music column written by Claude Jones, trombone with Cab Calloway. An article by Louis Armstrong was also featured in the last issue of the Tattler.

OUR OWN JELLY ROLL DEPARTMENT

On page 21 of the July "Metronome" appears a photograph captioned Bix Beiderbecke and Frankie Trumbauer. It's Bix, all right; but a glance is enough to show that his companion isn't Tram. Pee Wee Russell is our authority for the correction: the man shown with Bix is Frank "Josh" Billings, drummer of Mound City Blue Blower fame.

Chicago

The hoity-toity Guarantors Program held last Sunday night at Ravinia, for those kindly benefactors of longhairdom who are willing to gamble on the art, was the scene of some down-to-earth fun during its last portion. Four younger-spirited members of the Chicago Symphony appeared as a conventional string quartet, opening gently with a few yards of Beethoven.

At a rhythmic passage, the cellist put aside his bow and began a light pluck and slap leading into some solid choruses of Honeysuckle. Numerous encore calls brought Dinah and I Got Rhythm. Maybe we rowdies will have to find a new pastime.

Raymond Scott's orchestra replaced Jimmie Lunceford in the Panther Room of the Hotel Sherman this week.

Julanne Pelletier, long familiar as a white-hope hot pianist in Milwaukee and Chicago radio studios, is now located at the Playdium Bar in East St. Louis.

A raid on the gambling concession at the Indianapolis Cotton Club has closed the doors and put four boys out of work, and the only jazz group left in midtown is at the Oriental Cafe.

-- John Steiner.

GOODMAN RESTING, WILL RETURN SOON

Benny Goodman, released from the Mayo Clinic after two weeks of treatment for siatica, is now resting at Banff in the Canadian Rockies, and is expected to return to the band business soon.

Helen Forrest, Ziggy Elman and Charlie Christian are among the members of the old Goodman organization who are being kept on the payroll pending Benny's return.

Lionel Hampton, vibraphonist in the Goodman Sextet, was reported flying to Hollywood this week to form his own band.

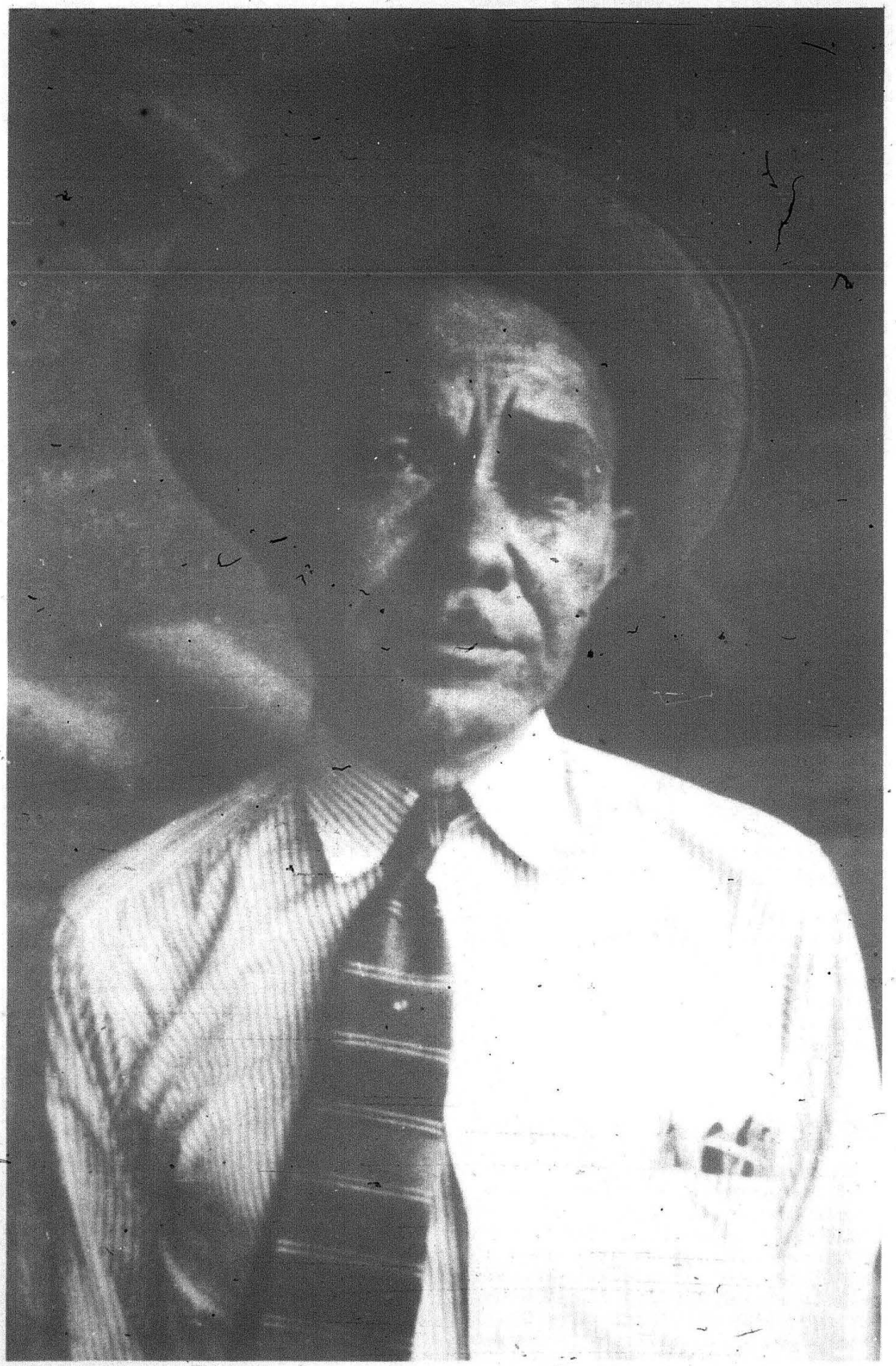


Photo by Edwin Marciniak

FATE MARABLE

"No Man Ever Cut Louis!" – FATE MARABLE

by Robert B. Sales

The calliope was playing for the crowd on the wharf as I walked up the gangplank of the Strekfus steamer Senator, running a week's excursions out of Louisville. At the keyboard was Fate Marable; meanwhile, Marable's Cotton Pickers were pounding out dance rhythms on a lower deck.

When Fate finished his steam piano job and came down to join the band, I saw a man legendary in the annals of jazz; one who has worked with and taught such men as Louis Armstrong, Red Allen and Baby Dodds. Fate Marable is small, spry, neat, youthful; and a musician to the bone. And -- I discovered -- he loves to reminisce. It would take months to list this veteran's memories of the earliest days of jazz -- the era of Perez and Bolden, of Mamie Desdume and Papa Joe Oliver, all of whom he knew. Those who complain of musicians' bad memories would be confounded by Marable's limitless capacity for names, times and places.

Fate Marable was born in Paducah, Kentucky, on December 2, 1890. His mother, a music teacher, taught him the piano, and at the age of nine he was picking up small change in saloons and dance halls around his home town. He knocked around Paducah and the country thereabouts for several more years, when the call of Old Man River became too strong to resist. He took a job playing piano on the Strekfus steamer "J. S." Since then he has never worked for any but the famous Strekfus line.

"They didn't have bands on many excursion boats at that time," said Fate. "The show boats had them, of course, but all we used on the 'J. S.' in 1907, when I got my first river boat job, was piano and violin. The fiddler with Fate, incidentally, was Emil Flindt, composer of "The Waltz You Saved For Me".

Marable's bands soon became known in New Orleans and up the river. As his fame grew, so did the size of his bands, and in 1915 he was using full-sized combinations on boats which catered to the local trade. A job with Fate was coveted in those days. He was the "big-time" of Southern dance musicians.

It was in 1919 that Louis Armstrong came under Fate's wing. Satchmo had been gigging around New Orleans, and then played with Kid Ory's band at Pete Lala's cabaret for over a year, when Marable discovered him. Louis recalls that Kid Ory's band was busily engaged in carving another outfit at the corner of Rampart and Perdido Streets when Marable propositioned him. Louis was only nineteen at the time.

Up to this time the northern steamers had always hired white bands for their long journey up the river from New Orleans to Pittsburgh. Fate's band, which went North on the Strekfus steamer "Dixie Belle", in 1919, was the first colored orchestra of any size to make such a trip.

His band was the "greatest in the country" in 1919, Fate says. It included Louis Armstrong and

JAZZ INFORMATION

Percy Suggs, cornets; Cooper, trombone; Davey Jones, mellophone and sax; Jerome "Don" Pasquall, clarinet and sax; Boyd Atkins (composer of "Heebie Jeebies"), violin; Johnny St. Cyr, banjo; Pop Foster, bass; and Baby Dodds, drums.

Captain Joe Strekfus of the "Dixie Belle", Fate recalls, bought a victrola before the return trip south in the fall of 1919. In the mornings, Louis and Davey Jones would go up to the top deck to listen to records, and Jones would be showing Louis how to read music, and how to get the effects that Louis wanted to play so much.

Louis is Fate's favorite topic of conversation. In Fate's own words: "Louis Armstrong is a superman. You can't compare him with other musicians; he's in a class by himself.

"I want you to be sure and write that there's no man that ever lived that could cut Louis," he added. "It sure makes me mad to hear that some folks are writing that Emmet Hardy made Armstrong throw in the sponge. As far as I know, Louis never even saw Hardy.

"In my opinion, the closest any white man ever came to Louis was when Paul Mares played with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, back in '22. Mares is the greatest white trumpet player I've ever heard, and I've heard them all, Bix included. I don't know where they get that crap about Hardy."

Fate's one and only recording was cut for Okeh in New Orleans in 1924, with a different and larger band. It is a coupling of Roy Bargy's "Pianoflage" and "Frankie and Johnnie", issued on Okeh 40113. The personnel for the date, as Fate gives it, was:

Sidney Desvigne and Amos White, cornets; Harvey Lankford, trombone; Norman Mason, Bert Bailey and Walter Thomas, saxes; Fate on piano; Willie Foster (Pop's brother), guitar; Henry Kimble, bass, and Zutty Singleton, drums. The record is interesting today chiefly for the stop-time chorus by Desvigne -- probably the only recorded work of this fine New Orleans cornetist.

Fate's present line-up includes: Sykes Smith, Walter Stanley, Benny Starks, trumpets; Drury Bess, trombone; Kimble Dial, Leon Goodson, Elbert Claybrook and Tommy Starks, saxes; John Young, guitar and vocals; William Moore, bass; and Lester Nichols, drums. The bass slapping of Moore - not to be confused with William "Bass" Moore -- was most impressive. Moore stepped into the band when Jimmy Blanton left Fate to join Duke Ellington; and although he has never had formal instruction, he's doing a swell job of filling Jimmy's shoes.

Fate has a great admiration for Benny Goodman. His favorite bands are Goodman's and Basie's; his ideal musicians of today Goodman, Blanton and Teddy Wilson. His own keyboard style is quite similar to Teddy's. He can't go for boogie-woogie -- he has to be "good and drunk" to play that way.

Finally, I asked Fate to name an all-star band composed of men who have played on the river boats with him. He took a good deal of time and deliberation over this - sifting through the recollections of more than twenty years! -- before he decided on the following combination:

Louis Armstrong, Red Allen and Irving Randolph, trumpets; Harvey Lankford and Nat Storey, trombones; Norman Mason, Bert Bailey, Earl Carruthers and Davey Jones, saxes; John Young, guitar; Jimmy Blanton, bass; Burroughs Lovengood, piano; and Baby Dodds, drums. Almost all of these men later hit Chicago and the Eastern big-time.

Fate was still going strong, his fund of memories apparently undiminished, when the boys swung into "Home, Sweet Home" and I was forced to bid him goodnight and goodbye. As I left, he called out: "Don't forget what I told you about Louis -- no one ever cut him and no one ever will!"

New Orleans Clarinets: 2

EDMOND HALL

by Herman Rosenberg and Eugene Williams

For the information used in preparing this article the authors are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Hall, John D. Reid, George Beall and Cootie Williams.

Edmond Hall is one of the New Orleans clarinet players who went back to small band jazz after years with large orchestras, and likes it that way. Disconcertingly, his favorite clarinet player is Benny Goodman. He'd like to be able to handle his instrument the way Benny does, he says; and use that magnificent technique for his own kind of ideas.

But he never plays in Goodman's style. You could walk into Nick's, when Hall played there with Zutty, or into Cafe Society when he was with Joe Sullivan, and know in a minute that the man behind that clarinet was from New Orleans. The exceptionally precise and charming quality of his phrasing, the way his tone rides clearly through an ensemble, the way he plays the blues in low register, hunched over his clarinet, are all New Orleans.

Still, Hall's originality is unmistakable. His tone is particularly individual: unusually big, very liquid, with a beautiful vibrato and a fine sense of tone values. He seems to be driven by a high inspiration; on most of the few good records he has made it's a considerable pleasure when the ensemble drops out, or a solo on another instrument ends, and Hall makes his entrance: relaxed, clean, different and hot.

Hall was born on Cadiz Street in New Orleans on May 15, 1901. The Halls were not only a musical family, they were a family of clarinet players. Besides Edmond there was his father, Edward Hall, who went to New York with the Onward Brass Band away back; his brother Robert, who played with the Tuxedo Band for a time, and another brother, Clarence, who still plays clarinet in New Orleans.

Edmond's first instrument was the guitar, which he strummed for two years before Robert's example persuaded him to begin practicing on his father's clarinet. Without a teacher, he picked up the New Orleans style by listening to the older members of his family and to such local stars as Willie Humphreys, Picou and Lorenzo Tio, Jr.

At sixteen he was gigging around the city with Thomas Valentine's band, playing guitar; and the next ten years of his life were spent in a succession of similar bands. After the War he changed to clarinet and played for about a year with Bud Roussell, a bass player who had Lee Collins on cornet and a drummer named "Face-O".

Most of the bands in New Orleans gigged, then. There was more money that way, and they seldom settled down to anything as long as a week's stand. Often the men in the bands had other jobs as well. Consequently, personnels were rather flexible. Every six months or so a band would break up or change radically. After months of working together, a musician might still be known to the others in the band simply (for instance) as "Face-O".

They used to play club dances on Monday nights, Hall remembers; and on the Sunday before, the boys would get together in a couple of cars and parade the streets, advertising their forthcoming appearance. It was when two bands met, on such parades, that the fam-

ous New Orleans battles of music took place. First one band played a tune, then the opposing band played the same tune -- better. Like all New Orleans old-timers, Hall says these "were the real jam sessions. We were out to cut the other bands, and we meant it."

All the bands Edmond gigged with at this time were the typical small New Orleans combination, usually cornet, clarinet, trombone, banjo, bass and drums. Only a few larger bands, such as Piron's and Robichaux, were using pianos. Others were content with a more portable rhythm section. It was all jam; no arrangements, no reading. These bands played a great assortment of traditional tunes, mostly blues: Tiger Rag, St. Louis, That's A Plenty, High Society, Tin Roff, Livery Stable, Wang Wang, Panama Rag; Scott Joplin's rags from the Red Book.

Hall stayed with Roussell about a year; in 1920, he and Collins went to trombonist Jack Carey, and gigged with him for about six months. Then, after a short stop with Chris Kelly, he joined Buddy Petit -- a famous cornetist, and one he still remembers with great respect. Buddy was one of the best cornets he ever heard, Hall says. He ranks him among the top men on that instrument: even Louis couldn't beat him for mastery of his horn, musicianship and inspiration. Playing with great skill in middle register, he inspired Edmond's style on clarinet; and evoked an admiration which still remains, long after Petit's death.

Hall left New Orleans for the first time with Buddy, traveling to Texas for some gigs in Houston, followed by a four-month stand at the Chop Suey in Galveston. For this engagement Buddy dropped his banjo and bass men, using instead a pianist, "Lazy Daddy"; and, incidentally, bringing in Face-O on drums to replace "Chinee".

Then came a year's gigging in Lake Charles, Louisiana, where Buddy added a violinist to front the band. Hall went back to New Orleans in 1923 and joined Mack Thomas' band for a trip to Pensacola, Florida, drawing their customers for gigs from the naval base there. Mack was a trumpet player; he used George Morris, trombone, Al Morgan, bass, and Chinee on drums.

This brings us to 1924, when Edmond joined a larger band for the first time. It was led by a pianist, "Eagle Eye" Shields, who used an alto sax, besides the traditional three melody instruments, to make an eight-piece combination. Trumpeter with this band was Cootie Williams; Cootie wasn't then playing the growl style he picked up later to fill Bubber Miley's shoes.

The Shields band played in Jacksonville and Miami, Florida, for two years. In 1926 or '27, Hall went into a larger and still more commercial band under the leadership of Alonzo Ross, playing jobs around the South.

This group had two trumpets, Cootie Williams and Melvin Herbert; Eddie Williams, trombone; Hall, Robert Cloud and the late Earl Evans, reeds; Ross, piano; Casper Tower, banjo; Dick Fulbright, bass, and Frank Houston, drums. Edmond was now beginning to double on sax, which he had never done in the small New Orleans outfits; he played alto and a little baritone.

A recording scout, down in Savannah to record Blue Steele's band on a portable set, discovered the Ross band; which subsequently made eight sides for Victor on August 22, 1927. They were "Skad-O-Lee" and "Florida Rhythm" (Victor 20-961); "Mary Bell" and "Lady Mine" (Victoe 20952); "Monia" and "Baby Stop Teasin' Me" (Victor 21077), all under the name of the Ross De Luxe Syncopators. "Don't You Wanta Know" and "Believe Me Dear" were never issued.

These records, quite commercial and heavily arranged, with few hot solos, are now very obscure, and seem to have been unknown to collectors until their rediscovery during the preparation of this article. When they were issued, however, Jay Faggen heard the records in New York and brought the band North to play at his Rosemont Ballroom, in Brooklyn, in 1928. They arrived on Thursday, March 15, in the snow, opened the following Sun-

Photo by O. Romaine

day, played two weeks, and disbanded. Edmond and Cootie landed on their feet when Hall got a job at Happyland, a Columbus Avenue ball room. The band was Cootie, trumpet; Hall clarinet and sax; Arthur Ford, piano, and Casey Short, drums.

In July of the following year, Hall and Ford left Happyland to play the season at the Paradise in Atlantic City, with Billy Fowler's band. In September, 1929, Hall returned to New York to join Charlie Skeet's band at the Venetian Garden, a dancing school on 57th Street.

Skeet's was an ordinary ballroom band, playing nothing but stocks; an easy job. Included in it were Geechy Fields, trombone; Elmer Williams and Powell, trumpets; Hall, Gene Johnson and Charlie Frazier, reeds; Skeet, piano; Walter "Joe" Jones, guitar; Henry Turner, bass, and Pete Jacobs, drums.

After two months, leader Skeet got the boot, and Claude Hopkins took over the band at the end of 1929. With a new brass section composed of Albert Snaer, Ovie Alston, Sylvester Lewis and Fernando Arbello, and with Bobby Sands on tenor in place of Frazier, Hopkins opened at the Savoy in January, 1930, and played there for nine months.

From the Savoy, Claude and the boys moved to the Roseland, where they played, on and off, until 1934. Fred Norman was added later as second trombone, and a fourth sax, Hilton Jefferson, came in about '32. Meanwhile Hopkins was recording: first for Columbia, then for Brunswick and Decca. In these records (which, incidentally, have been unjustly neglected) Hall was often featured on both clarinet and baritone sax. On the latter instrument, he had developed a powerful and melodic solo style which he still uses occasionally. But while he ranks high as a baritone player, his instrument is the clarinet. And it was so then, too; for only a single example, listen to the Hopkins record of "How'm I Doin'" on Columbia.

After leaving Hopkins in 1935 Hall laid off for a while, and his next big band job was with Lucky Millinder. He played with Lucky for a short time in 1937, just before Millinder made his last try for the big-time with Charlie Shavers, Harry Edison, Billy Kyle, O'Neil Spencer and other newcomers in his band.

Then came the job with trumpeter Billy Hicks, who played the Savoy for six months in 1937 with seven pieces and then was called downtown to liven the atmosphere of the swanky St. Regis Hotel's basement dining room with a little hot music. Hicks' Sizzling Six opened in September, 1937 (Arbello, trombone; Dick Fulbright, bass). Business was fine, but the Southern patrons of the St. Regis didn't like the idea of a colored band in their dining room, and the Sizzling Six fizzled out of the St. Regis on New Year's Eve.

Hicks made one bad record for Irving Mills' short-lived record company, Variety. About the same time, Hall was recording with the Frank Newton pick-up bands for the same label: "You Showed Me The Way", "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone", "Who's Sorry Now", "Onyx Hop", "There's No Two Ways", "Brittwood Stomp", "Found A New Baby", "Easy Living", and "Where Or When." When the Mills firm folded in the Fall of '37 some of the Newton sides were taken over by Vocalion; since then, all have been out out.

They were neat little records, for the most part, with jam-style arrangements by Frankie leaving plenty of room for solos by Hall, Newton, Pete Brown and Cecil Scott. Edmond's best recorded playing, to out recollection, appeared on the Newtons. On "Please Don't Talk About Me", for example, he played an extraordinary solo which is reminiscent, in a way, of Frank Teschemacher. Hall and Tesch are alike in the way they alter the New Orleans clarinet to their own purpose, at once simplifying and intensifying its line.

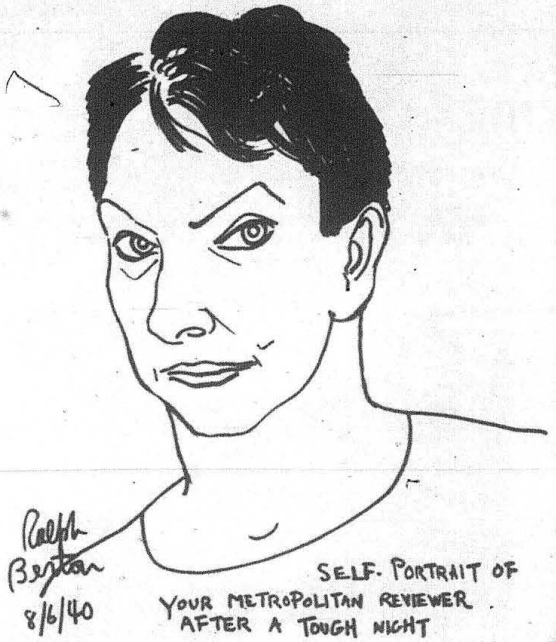
These records, too, attracted a group of interested listeners to Hall's clarinet; a group which has grown steadily ever since. He was

(Turn to page 29)

ON THE AIR

AN INTERVIEW WITH RALPH BERTON

by Ralph J. Gleason



SELF-PORTRAIT OF YOUR METROPOLITAN REVIEWER AFTER A TOUGH NIGHT

When Ralph Berton started his series of jazz programs last June on New York's municipal station WNYC, he hadn't any idea he would turn out to be a missionary. All he wanted to do was to run a program of real jazz records, something the radio had been neglecting.

Then WNYC's listeners began to write to the station about Ralph's program, the Metropolitan Review. At least one-third, it turned out, came from people who had never been concerned with jazz, but whose interest had been aroused when they heard Berton's air show. Others were from jitterbugs who listened to Ralph's records and realized for the first time that there was something more than "corn" in them. A third group came from lovers of hot music, who were delighted to hear a program of Bix, Louis and Tesch instead of Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw.

Ralph feels that this is one of the most reassuring things about his program; that besides filling a long-felt need, he is increasing the audience for hot jazz by convincing previously allergic people that the music is not something alien to good taste.

As the only jazz program on the air, the Metropolitan Review gets an average of twenty letters a day, some from as far as Cincinnati and Wilmington. They seem to run in bunches, Ralph says -- sometimes a couple a day, then a sudden rush of letters such as followed his attack on Jim Crowism last week. One listener had written that too many records of colored jazz were being played. Ralph's reply, via WNYC, drew a hail-of congratulations.

Even such a money-wise trade sheet as Radio Daily has praised the Metropolitan Review, taking the networks to task for their neglect of the public's growing interest in genuine hot jazz.

Ralph claims to know more about concert music than jazz, and offers this as a reason why his arguments in favor of the latter seem to impress lovers of classical music. But his brother is Vic Berton, the drummer with Bix, Nichols, Whiteman and other famous jazzmen of the twenties. Interested in jazz at the age of seven through Vic's example, Ralph sat in on drums with King Oliver's band when he was nine; later, when Vic was managing the Wolverines, he lived with Bix.

Close contact with jazz made him accept it as a matter of fact. It was only in the last few years, as his interest in concert music became greater, that he found peo-

Photo courtesy of Happy Cauldwell

ple unwilling to accept jazz on the level Ralph placed it. From informal talks about jazz with friends in his home was born the idea of the Metropolitan Review.

All this in spite of the fact that part of the program is taken up by a municipal plug, in the form of a quiz (New York City; what to do, where to go and how to get there), which seems to be the station's main reason for putting Berton on the air. But he can't complain; half a jazz program is better than none, and when he isn't boosting New York he can play jazz and blues records to his heart's content. He can even stop the record to play a certain phrase over when he wants to make a point.

Ralph doesn't neglect modern jazz, but records by Lionel Hampton, Roy Eldridge and Coleman Hawkins must compete with those of Armstrong, Bix, the Chicagoans. He emphasizes the blues, too. He can't play blues records indiscriminately on the air, of course; such innocent items as Jelly Roll Morton's "Mamie's Blues" are taboo. Nevertheless he has been able to treat the air waves to the unaccustomed sound of Walter Davis, Big Bill, Alice Moore and other race artists. Privately issued hot jazz records, too, are often featured.

The program's unsponsored, of course, and takes some pushing around from station officials. A half-hour shot on Thursday nights, at 9:30, called the "History of Jazz", may be cancelled soon. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Review itself is heard on WNYC (810 kilocycles) from 1:30 to 2:00 P. M. Monday through Wednesday; 1:45 to 2:00 P. M. Thursday and Friday; and on alternate Saturdays from 1:30 to 2:00.

ELMER SNOWDEN'S NEST CLUB ORCHESTRA, 1925. Left to right: Te Roy Williams, trombone; Elmer Snowden, leader and banjo; Joe Garland, alto and baritone; Walter Johnson, drums; Freddy. Johnson, piano; Bob Ysaguirre, bass; Prince Robinson, tenor and clarinet; Rex Stewart, cornet.

Photo courtesy of Happy Cauldwell

WILLIAM RUSSELL

by Ed Nylund

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Those of you who may not have heard the news will be glad to know that William Russell, famed jazz critic, comparative musicologist, specialist in Oriental instruments, and legit. composer is in San Francisco for the summer.

Bill, a quiet, unassuming character who enjoys the friendship and respect of big-time musicians and writers, both abroad and in the East, will undoubtedly deplore the mild notoriety which we hope this article will stimulate for him amongst members of the Society.

William Russell is 35 years, long, lean, lanky, blond and baldish. His main sorrow about his childhood is that he was raised on the Mississippi, heard many of the history-making Negro bands that floated up the river from New Orleans, doesn't remember any of them, and, to top it off, is obliged to admit that he went home all the quicker to blot out the shameful sounds by practicing on his violin.

Around 1924 he studied music in Chicago. There he further mortified his conscience as a ranking jazz critic by going to legit. concerts at the Chicago Musical College; next door, as he found out to his disgust, many years later, Rappolo and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings were playing their

JAZZ INFORMATION

hearts out. He also managed to fluff off King Oliver and his band completely and to pass blithely and unscathed to New York in 1927.

At Teachers College at Columbia University, he began to see the light. In 1929, he got hold of Jelly Roll Morton's record of "Shoe Shiner's Drag"; this hit him a nasty blow below the belt and ever since that time he's been doubled over looking for records.

Along with his love for hot jazz he picked up an interest in percussion music, wandered down to Haiti in 1932 to notate melodies and rhythmic effects, started a collection of Cuban and Haitian instruments, and came back to the U.S. with some new ideas.

In 1934, he composed a trumpet concerto with percussion accompaniment; half-way through the work, he lost heart when he realized it was a waste of time to write down music that Armstrong (Russell's one great love in jazz) was playing day after day.

He has kept up, however, his interest in experimental music (right word, Bill?). Percussion compositions of his have been published by New Music (radical long-hair publishers); and performed throughout the United States.

In 1934, while still at Columbia, he began another one of his innumerable activities. This was the troupe of players who put on Chinese shadow plays to which Bill plays the accompaniment on authentic Chinese gongs, flutes, and fiddles. Their plays, incidentally, are quite good. Drop in at 8:45 any night except Sunday to Old Chinatown, in San Francisco's Chinatown - Washington Street, above Grant - and see the Red Gate Players' Chinese Shadow Plays, in color, plus Bill Russell on Chinese stringed, gong and percussion instruments.

Soon after he started the Chinese angle, he and Steve Smith began the Hot Record Exchange in N.Y. which later developed into the Hot Record Society and reprints of rare records. Steve Smith stayed in N.Y. and sold the records which Bill picked up in swings around the country with the Shadow Play group.

Russell's reputation as a critic rests primarily on the chapters "New Orleans", "Louis Armstrong", and "Boogie Woogie" which he contributed to the book "Jazzmen". Recently RCA-Victor had him write the booklet for the Yancey album of Boogie Woogie solos. Bill's renown has also reached the scholars since he was requested to write the article on "The Technical Aspects of Jazz" for v. 5 of the Boletin Latino-Americano de Musica.

What does he like in jazz? For one thing, he is going to get every thing that Louis Armstrong ever made. At present he is two years behind on the new Deccas and hasn't bought them because he moves around so much. He's especially partial to small bands, and thinks the New Orleans tradition is the core of all that is real in jazz.

It's not exactly cricket to harp on the individual preferences of a practicing music critic, but some of Russell's many favorites can be indicated, however; Meade Lux Lewis and the rest of the Boogie Woogie men, Bessie Smith, Teschemacher, Wingy, Earl Hines, Bechet, Muggsy, Pee Wee Russell, Higginbotham, the Teagardens, both of the Dodds, Bud Freeman and the rest of the numerous musicians who are known for their work in small jam outfits.

Bill, whose contact with the music throughout the country is so extensive, has found that the tradition of the blues is gradually dying out: "radio will kill it", he says. In fact, he has witnessed performances in Harlem where blues singers were booed down.

At present, the main Russell energies are directed toward acquiring an M.A. degree in music. Here's hoping that San Francisco jazz history and the Barbary Coast days will be the subject of a university thesis.

BURY THE DEAD

by Kenneth Haig

This is the fifth in a series of guest columns by prominent collectors. The editors do not necessarily agree with the ideas expressed. The title of the series is specially significant -- all contributors will be entitled to blow their top.

There's probably more loose talk about various styles than there is about anything else except how marvelous that phoney Belderbecke was. Hugues Panassie probably gave the idea its biggest push when he called one of his chapters "Le Style Chicago" and Delaunay's section in Discography followed it up like a Gene Tunney one-two. So we got a Chicago style.

New Orleans style came next in order of appelative appearance, and Dorothy Baker gave Memphis style a boost in "Young Man With A Horn". New York style never got established, but it looks as though we're in for a Kansas City style.

I can hardly refrain from commenting, "So what".

Let's forget the names and concentrate on the music. You can't apply the name to the music without running into grief, and here's why -- if you use a precise definition, then a term like "Chicago style" can't cover both the McKenzie-Condon Okehs, whose rhythm section featured Jim Lannigan's cloudy, thumping bass, and the Chicago Rhythm Kings Brunswick, which had a crisp rhythm section with just banjo, piano and drums. (Anyone who has the Brunswick record will recognize the onomatopoeic use of the word "crisp".)

Well, you will say, we must make the definition less inclusive. But where to stop?

I think the best thing to do is to limit definitions by merely saying, for instance, that Chicago style was the way a certain group of musicians played in the twenties and let it go at that.

What those same musicians play today is not the same music. Listen to Bud Freeman's Bluebirds. However the old Chicago musicians can play somewhat in the same way for brief flashes. Listen to the records in Decca's Chicago Album. They were trying there. Following the old Chicago formula helped, too. Those in-between-chorus flares have been missing too long. Even so, George Avakian's records are a flop as Chicago style. Chicago style was a phenomenon of its time and time has been marching on.

Decca, nevertheless, should be congratulated for putting out some fine records. And next they are planning some New Orleans records, which sound just as interesting.

But what's New Orleans music? I'd say ensemble music as played by King Oliver's Jazz Band. I wish everybody had a copy of Oliver's Gennett record of Canal Street Blues and Just Gone. (I was lucky enough to find several brand new copies of Oliver Gennetts six years ago - the only Gennetts I have ever seen down here in Georgia). Instead of being "showpieces" like Dippermouth and High Society, these sides are real down to earth ensemble with everybody digging in like mad.

The music doesn't sound improvised the way the Chicago stuff does, but it's loose enough to

give the same effect. On Canal Street a couple of Johnny Dodds choruses are the only solos, and the other side is ensemble all the way. That's what I would call real New Orleans music.

I don't know how authentic it is, but I'm just as safe as the boys who insist that Buddy Bolden or Bunk Johnson was the best trumpet player, when they have never heard either of them blow a damn note. It hurt a little to read, in the midst of Bill Russell's swell story on Zue Robinson, that Zue's only record date didn't do him justice and he was really a lot better. We can hear Zue on records for ourselves, but I don't know if even Bill ever heard Zue play in person. So how does anyone KNOW?

Getting back to the decision that New Orleans style is King Oliver's music, it seems to me, that after the Clarence Williams Blue Five, Armstrong's Hot Five, and the Chicago Footwarmers (which brings us up to 1928) colored musicians seem to have given up the old ensemble style. Soloists have come too much into prominence.

Most colored bands tend to follow the Chocolate Dandies idea: the jam band instrumentation using full arrangements and lots of solos. The Hawkins-Allen Melotone, Jamaica Shout, and dozens of other small band records, even up to Frankie Newton and John Kirby, follow this idea.

Colored bands jamming sound like everybody taking a solo all at once. Look at almost any record Sidney Bechet plays on. He plays a lead instrument, but so does a trumpet player!

The good white musicians, on the other hand, can still jam because they work together for the sake of the ensemble. As examples, take the Muggsy Spanier Bluebirds. That's how a jam band should sound, not like a batch of sore thumbs sticking out all over the lot.

The old music, in general, is gone irretrievably. It grew out of sin (which goes well with gin) and there isn't as much sin now, so there isn't as much of the old music, either. The colored boys now get paid.

You can bet right now that the Decca New Orleans Album won't sound as much New Orleans as it will sound like Bechet climbing all over Armstrong. By some stroke of luck, they might actually turn out a little like the Hot Five or Chicago Footwarmers, but they'll probably be closer to Jelly Roll Morton's Jazzmen.

Like the Chicago Album, these should still be good records. But if we're going to use names, like New Orleans style, let's limit them enough so that they'll mean something. They won't mean a thing if they're applied to 1940 records, even by 1920 musicians. You had to catch them then, or not at all.

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NEW RECORDS

THE CHOCOLATE DANDIES

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME
I SURRENDER, DEAR — CMS 1506

SMACK — CMS 533

Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Benny Carter, alto sax and piano; Bernard Addison, guitar; John Kirby, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.

COLEMAN HAWKINS and his Rhythm

DEDICATION — CMS 533

Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Bernard Addison, guitar; John Kirby, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.

Milt Gabler revives the name of the "Chocolate Dandies" for a pick-up band composed of big-time graduates of Fletcher Henderson's orchestra. Two twelve-inch and two ten-inch sides were made; "Dedication", played by Hawkins and rhythm only, appears under Hawkins' name.

Comparisons with older Chocolate Dandies records are fruitless, of course. Hawkins and Carter played quite differently with Jimmy Harrison and Bobby Stark, nine years ago, than they do today with Roy Eldridge. Aside from that, the new session makes no attempt to follow the style of the old Chocolate Dandies (which, for that matter, varied considerably from date to date). It's simply an all-star jam band in which solos by Eldridge, Carter and Hawkins can be heard together.

The best sides are the two slow performances: "I Surrender Dear", on which Carter plays background piano, and "Dedication". The first named consists entirely of three long solos: two by Hawkins and one by Eldridge, who also comes in behind The Hawk in the last chorus. Hawkins' first is beautiful in his familiar rhapsodic vein. Following it Roy begins very impressively, with a lovely, highly colored tone and simple, sensitive playing. As he continues, Roy's attempts to increase tension lead to a few tasteless bars; and the same must be said of Hawkins' second solo, which ends, however, in a charming coda.

Except for the intro and close by the rhythm, "Dedication" is all Hawkins. Again with an occasional lapse, he plays chorus after chorus of fine tenor in medium tempo. The composition is by Leonard Feather.

"Smack", also a Feather original, is so named to point the moral of the ex-Henderson personnel of the Commodore's Dandies. This is the least interesting of all four sides. Carter, Eldridge and Hawkins take fast solos which go too far on the diddle-ee-ah side. Hawkins' violently strained tone on fast tempos, which he seems to have developed in Europe or since his return, is especially unpleasant.

Returning to the twelve-incher; "I Can't Believe" is played in jam style, fairly fast. First chorus

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

BB - Bluebird	De - Decca
BN - Blue Note	OK - Okeh
CMS - Commodore	Vi - Victor
Co - Columbia	Vo - Vocalion

Photo by Charles Peterson

A BLUE NOTE SESSION: BUNN, CATLETT, NEWTON, WILLIAMS, HIGGINBOTHAM

by Hawkins and Roy, second by Hawkins, then Roy plays some fair trumpet, getting a bit mixed up in his ideas at one point. Carter's alto solo sounds much like the one on "Smack". Final chorus is jammed out.

The three-piece rhythm section is adequate for the type of music played on this session; Catlett drums well and unobtrusively, and the only weak spots are contributed by Kirby.

JOE BUSHKIN CMS 532
Piano solos

SERENADE IN THIRDS
I CAN'T GET STARTED

As one of its three new "Classics in Swing", Commodore offers the first recorded piano solos of Joe Bushkin, the young pianist who has drawn increasing attention in the later parts of his travels from Marsala to Berigan to Spanier to Dorsey. Bushkin, who has improved immensely since his 52nd Street beginnings, now plays a dapper, eclectic style, reminding us at various moments of Waller, Stacy, Tatum and Bix. These solos are not as hot as some of his choruses on the Muggsy Bluebirds; on the other hand, they are much less thin. No one-finger improvisations, they have careful and pleasant harmonies.

Less precise and less severely self-critical than Jess Stacy, and playing with less swing, Bushkin nevertheless creates interesting, modern piano music in a similar vein.

PORT OF HARLEM JAZZ MEN BN 14

PORT OF HARLEM BLUES

Frank Newton, trumpet; J.C. Hig-

ginbotham, trombone; Albert Ammons, piano; Teddy Bunn, guitar, Johnny Williams, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.

FRANK NEWTON QUINTET BN 14

Frank Newton, trumpet; Meade "Lux" Lewis, piano; Teddy Bunn, guitar; Johnny Williams, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.

A new Blue Note twelve-incher couples two sides from that company's first recording dates. "Port of Harlem Blues", by the six-piece band which waxed "Mighty Blues" and "Rockin' The Blues", is a slow, extremely restrained blues, perhaps the best side from that session. Newton and Higginbotham play with muted horns throughout. Frankie's first chorus leads into a long trombone solo, beginning with a phrase often used by Higginbotham on the Blue Notes, then moving into new inventions. This is the best solo: following it are alternate choruses by Newton, Ammons, Newton again, Bunn, and the closing ensemble. Throughout, the unique atmosphere, produced at Blue Note's sessions by unusual instrumentation -- in this case only two brass plus rhythm -- and a heavy beat, is sustained. This tone might be called muffled.

A crisper and, to our ear, more attractive blues is "After Hour", which consists of a series of solos by Newton, Bunn, Meade "Lux" Lewis, and finally Newton again. First three solos are unusually good; Newton's carefully designed blues playing is original and tasteful. Bunn is exceptionally economical and thoughtful, and Meade Lux plays some of his pensive slow blues. Our only quarrel would be with Frankie's last chorus, which is good in part but introduces one unnecessary scream and a disconcerting drop to low register.

SIDNEY BECHET Vi 26663
and his New Orleans Feetwarmers

NOBODY KNOWS THE WAY I FEEL
DIS MORNIN'
OLD MAN BLUES

Sidney De Paris, trumpet; Sandy Williams, trombone; Sidney Bechet, clarinet and soprano sax; Cliff Jackson, piano; Bernard Addison, guitar; Wellman Braud, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.

Second two sides from Bechet's latest Victor date prove even better than the first. Surprisingly, the outstanding musician on this date was not Bechet but Sandy Williams: a great trombonist, and one who has been too seldom recorded. Sandy takes two fine choruses on this coupling; on "Nobody Knows", he blows a broad, powerful horn that sounds extraordinarily like the old Jack Teagarden -- the high notes shouting and violent, phrasing simple and classic. For "Old Man Blues" he plays a different style, sliding and trilling in the fashion we associate with Benny Morton.

Besides Williams, there's Sidney De Paris, playing excellent muted trumpet, with a fine growl solo on "Old Man Blues" against Catlett's tom-toms. Other solos are by Bechet, in his usual vein, and Addison, playing an inoffensive guitar on "Old Man Blues".

The latter, of course, is an Ellington tune; "Nobody Knows", a slow blues never previously recorded, is very attractive except for a plaintive background figure which, in crescendo, becomes monotonous.

COOTIE WILLIAMS Vo 5618
and his Rug Cutters

BLUES A POPPIN'
BLACK BUTTERFLY

Cootie Williams, trumpet; Barney Bigard, clarinet and sax; Johnny Hodges, alto; Harry Carney, baritone; Duke Ellington, piano; Jimmy Blanton, bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

"Black Butterfly" is a piece of slow, nostalgic Ellingtonia, first recorded a few years ago by Duke's whole band on Brunswick. The new version is a trumpet solo by Cootie, listenable but less varied and with less effective orchestration that the origional recording.

On the reverse, " Blues A Poppin'" offers little but some unexpected harmonies, Cootie's trumpet, a short alto passage in Hodges'

lovely tone, and some one-fingered Ellington piano.

JOE SULLIVAN — Ok 5647
and his Cafe Society Orchestra

COQUETTE
I'VE GOT A CRUSH ON YOU

Eddie Anderson, trumpet; Benny Morton, trombone; Edmond Hall, clarinet; Danny Polo, tenor sax; Joe Sullivan, piano; Billy Taylor, bass; Yank Porter, drums.

Another of the good little records Joe Sullivan has been making -- this one is the first on Okeh -- "Coquette" is a neat job in brisk tempo, with good solos (especially Sullivan's piano, now using broken rhythms reminiscent of Hines, Benny Morton's trombone and Hall's clarinet). There's a jammed ending with all the boys together, and the side's only weak spots are a bad trumpet solo and some shiftless arranging. Equally good, for its purpose, is the other side: a sophisticated pop tune, nicely sung by Helen Ward with some very decorative piano backgrounding.

BOBBY HACKETT — Vo 5620
and his Orchestra

AFTER I SAY I'M SORRY
THAT OLD GANG OF MINE

Hackett and his small band of Horace Heidt men. Commercial, and entirely trivial.

BUSTER BAILEY SEXTET — Va 8365

PINE TOP'S BOOGIE WOOGIE
ECCENTRIC RAG

Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Benny Carter, alto sax; Billy Kyle, piano; John Kirby, bass; Zutty Singleton, drums.

On its second Varsity date under Buster Bailey's name, the John Kirby band included two unexpected substitutions: Carter for Procope, Zutty for Spencer. It would take more than that to alter the band's style appreciably, of course. "Eccentric" is a smooth, non-Dixieland rendition of the Dixieland tune; Zutty takes a heavy drum break. Shavers plays nicely with a mute. Short breaks by Carter and Shavers are the only interest in a toy version of the "Boogie Woogie".

WALTER GROSS — BB 10795
Piano solos

I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS
A SLIGHT CASE OF IVORY

Walter Gross, formerly featured pianist on CBS' Saturday evening swing program, displays an expert touch, facile style and scintillating technique on his first two piano solos, one pop tune and an original. Gross swings lightly in the Waller manner, but won't impress followers of hot piano.

Larger Bands

LOUIS ARMSTRONG — De 3283
and his Orchestra

LAZY 'SIPPI STEAMER
HEP CATS' BALL

Very little to be heard on either of these two new sides; one inoffensive pop tune, one jive special, both provided with Armstrong vocals and trumpet playing. For showmanship.

CHARLIE BARNET — BB 10785
and his Orchestra

ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM
REVERIE OF A MOAX

The "Moax" side is a listenable piece of Barnet mood music. "Rockin' In Rhythm", though, is a first rate mess. The Ellington material is hashed into a set of stupid, noisy riffs, with equally unpleasant and meaningless solos.

WOODY HERMAN — De 3272
and his Orchestra

HERMAN AT THE SHERMAN
JUKIN'

A considerable relief to hear, after Barnet, is "Herman At The Sherman" -- a nice, clean, simple, swingy piece of fairly commercial dance music, with an effective rhythm section and neat piano by

Tommy Linehan. The coupling is too fast and too noisy.

EARL HINES BB 10792
and his Orchestra

TANTALIZING A CUBAN
YOU CAN DEPEND ON ME

First side features Walter Fuller, trumpet and vocal, and a piano chorus by the Father which lets us down. Hines is better when he hits his stride on the reverse, which consists of long solos by guitar, bass, drums and piano.

COUNT BASIE Ok 5629
and his Orchestra

GONE WITH "WHAT" WIND
BLOW TOP

The first side, originally recorded by the Goodman Sextet, finds better treatment at Basie's hands. The band plays its riffs with increasing precision of tone and timing, but with no loss in warmth. Buddy Tate's tenor chorus shows a very big tone and strong attack; a good trombone solo comes from Dan Minor. The coupling fails to click. It's an original by Tab Smith, who joined the band on this side. Tab's alto solo, following a silly piano chorus, sounds like Johnny Hodges in the way it combines a languishing tone with rapid movement. After it comes raucous Harry Edison trumpet. Between the three solos, the unity is destroyed. Lester Young follows with some of his smooth tenor work.

ANDY KIRK De 3282
and his Clouds of Joy

FIFTEEN MINUTE INTERMISSION
FINE AND MELLOW

Andy Kirk's June Richmond, singing the Billie Holiday blues "Fine And Mellow", strains rather unpleasantly; heavy arranging and violent drumming further distort the form of the piece. On the reverse, Miss Richmond out-Fitzgeralds Ella. Mary Lou takes a short, unusual solo on the first side; Floyd Smith and Ted Donelly have guitar and trombone spots on the second.

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GENE KRUPA — Ok 5627
and his Orchestra

BLUE RHYTHM FANTASY
Parts I and II

You'll have to pick the good parts in this six-minute recording of Chappie Willett's Ellingtonian piece. The best spot, probably, is Krupa's long percussion solo on the second side. It has little to do with the rest of the record; but it's not the kind of flashy cymbal kicking that makes most drum solos objectionable. Rather, it's a restrained and inventive rhythm solo, drawn partly -- we imagine -- from Victor's albim of African music.

For the rest, the arrangement's remarkably uneven. Tasteful and effectively played sections altemate with overdone ideas that fail to come off. The section work, on the whole, takes more credit than the soloists. Sam Musiker should stop trying to imitate Benny Goodman and Barney Bigard in one breath.

BENNY GOODMAN — BB 10799
and his Orchestra

WALK, JENNY, WALK
ALWAYS

More Goodman classics reissued on Bluebird remind us that as swing bands go, Benny had a pretty good one quite a few years ago. On these two well done sides, solos by trombone and clarinet are outstanding.

JIMMIE LUNCEFORD — Co 35547
and his Orchestra

CHOPIN'S PRELUDE #7
BUGS PARADE

Chopin is uncrisped in Lunceford's hands. The "Prelude" should be of little interest to lovers of jazz -- or Chopin. Lunceford fans may differ. "Bugs Parade" is also inferior to the recent Lunceford standard;

Two record numbers were omitted from the review column in our last issue. Louis Armstrong's "Cut Off My Legs -- Sweethearts On Parade" is Decca 3235; Benny Carter's "Serenade To A Sarong -- Pom Pom" is Decca 3262.

Blues Records

CHAIN GANG — Co Album C-22
Joshua White and his Carolinians

NINE FOOT SHOVEL
CHAIN GANG BOUN' — Co 35559

GOIN' HOME? BOYS
TROUBLE — Co 35560

CRYIN' WHO? CRYIN' YOU!
Parts I and II — Co 35561

TOLD MY CAP'N
JERRY — Co 35562

Not blues, although so marked on the label, is this special Columbia album. White's Carolinians, a vocal chorus with guitar accompaniment, are heard in seven Negro chants of the chain gangs. Folk music, then and a diluted variety. The songs in this album sound genuine enough (no chain-gang expert speaking); but the performance, arranged and refined, sounds too much like an educated spiritual choir. Some of the songs - "Cryin' Who?" in particular -- are worth hearing, though; and the album will interest collectors of folk music.

BABY DOO	Death of Walter Barnes
De 7763	(reverse by Gene Gilmore)
BIG BILL	Down And Lost In Mind
Ok 05641	Messed Up In Love
SLEEPY JOHN ESTES	Drop Down
De 7766	Tell Me How About It
GENE GILMORE	The Natchez Fire
De 7763	(reverse by Baby Doo)
JIMMIE GORDON	Trigger Slim Blues
De 7764	Nobody Knows The Trouble
BUDDY MOSS	Jinx Man Blues
Ok 05626	Oh Lordy Mama
PEETIE'S BOY	Stay Out All Night
De 7767	Gonna Keep It For My Daddy
TAMPA RED	You Say We're Through
BB 8475	The Way To Get The Low-Down
BUKKA WHITE	Good Gin Blues
Ok 05625	Bukka's Jitterbug Swing
YAS YAS GIRL	Black Gypsy Blues
Vo 05614	I'm Not Your Fool

Decca's July race releases concluded with a group of records by artists new to that company's list. Their trend is away from the modernized blues usually recorded for Decca in New York, and toward a purer folk-blues.

Outstanding in the lot are Baby Doo's and Gene Gilmore's story-blues of the Natchez dance hall fire. On both sides the piano accompanist is quite unmistakably Walter Davis, Bluebird's star blues man.

"Peetie's Boy", Robert Mc Coy sings in Wheatstraw's style, but without Peetie's personality. On the "Gonna Keep It" side, he features attractive blues shouting by Ann Sortier, in an amusing washboard blues.

Sleepy John Estes, absent from the Decca list a long time, makes a welcome return with two good sides in his quick, throaty style. Accompaniment by guitar, harmonica and washboard.

The last Vocalion race record is by the Yas Yas Girl, with two fair blues recorded in Chicago; good piano and drums accompaniment. Columbia's newer race items, on Okeh, include blues shouters Big Bill and Bukka White; the first with guitar, and drums, the second with washboard and his own guitar. Both are good. Also on Okeh is a repressing from Perfect of two Buddy Moss blues, recommended for excellent singing and guitar. "Lawdy" is the same tune sung by Bumble Bee Slim on Decca.

Bluebird falls behind, offering only an insignificant Tampa Red release.

PIANO IN THE BAND - Book Review

PIANO IN THE BAND
A novel by Dale Curran.
Reynal and Hitchcock, $2.00

It seems that people will write novels about jazz. Look at Dorothy Baker, and now this guy Dale Curran writes one, Piano in the Band. (This title is also borrowed from an article by Otis Ferguson.)

The book is built around the desire of George Baker, who plays piano for Jeff Walters' band, to break away from the commercial music of his Whiteman-Lewis-Svengali leader. It reaches a tabloid climax when Frenchy, a rum-soaked hop-head whose wife Walters has appropriated and moulded into a torch singer, is goaded by the boys in the band into killing Walters. The murder frees the rebel spirits of the musicians whom Walters bullied into playing his commercial music, and leaves the door open for Baker to help form the mixed band his heart is set on.

Writing in typical Collier's serial style, Curran appears to have only a slight grasp of the music, and only a slightly better grasp of the environment which he works into the book in a professing fashion.

Highlight, and only authentic section of the book, is a dramatic flash-back to Baker's non-union scuffling in the days before he made good with Walters.
ionally glib manner. Jam sessions described by Curran haveam awkward falseness completely alien to the real thing. The band's tour from New York through Chicago to Davenport, complete with its petty jealousies and conflicts, is handled in a competent, but unconvinc-

Worst section, in my opinion, is the closing chapter when Walters' death is made known to the boys in the band at a jam session as they are playing Baker's arrangement(!) of his favorite tune. The tension is very badly handled and the dialogue following the announcement of Walters' death is as amateurish as possible.

Someday someone will write a novel that will deal with musicians and their music and not find it necessary to gloss over lack of insight into the field by glib writing.

John Byron Armstrong

COLLECTORS' ITEMS

NORDSKOG - HOLLYWOOD - SUNSHINE

The Nordskog Phonograph Recording Company, established in California in 1921, boasts on its label "First on the Pacific Coast". This company produced a few interesting jazz records, among the first ever made by colored bands. For information on these we are indebted to Dave Stuart, Hollywood's Jazz Man.

We reproduce on this page the label of a Sunshine record by Ory's Sunshine Orchestra, merely for the pictorial value of this rather rare disc, which many of the younger collectors may never see. It is Sunshine 3003, "Society Blues" and "Ory's Creole Trombone". Incidentally, anyone who cares to remove the Sunshine label by chipping, steaming or cajoling (a phase of collecting which we have never investigated) will find beneath it the original label: Nordskog 3009, the same titles under the name of "Spikes Seven Pods of Pepper Orchestra".

The Ory records, it seems, were origionally recorded for Nordskog

The Ory records, it seems, were originally recorded for Nordskog, and issued under the Spikes name on Nordskog and another local label, Hollywood. The Spikes Brothers, Reb and Johnny, had their own business in Los Angeles, and bought Nordskog's records to issue under their own name. Since all the Nordskogs arrived with the labels attached, the Spikes had their own Sunshine labels printed and merely pasted them over the Nordskogs.

"Society Blues", by the way, is a composition of the Spikes brothers a

ers, and has nothing to do with "High Society". Besides this coupling, the same band made four sides of vocal accompaniment, which appeared on both Nordskog and Sunshine: with Roberta Dudley, "Krooked Blues" and "When You're Alone", Sunshine 3001; with Ruth Lee, "That Sweet Something" and "Maybe Someday", Sunshine 3002.

Though far from extraordinary jazz, these sides -- especially those by orchestra alone -- are of unusual historical interest. Their personnel is as follows:

Papa Mut Carey, cornet; Kid Ory, trombone; Dink Johnson, clarinet; Fred Washington, piano; Montolley, bass, and Ben Borders, drums. Here is impressive proof of the way New Orleans music had spread across the continent; Ory and Carey were famous in New Orleans, of course, before they came to California; and the clarinet player, apparently, is that same Dink Johnson who was drummer in the Origional Creole Band.

The Nordskogs are Ory's and Carey's first records; and Carey's only ones. Compared to the brilliant New Orleans ensemble of King Oliver's Jazz Band or the driving blues of Charles Creath's Jazzomaniacs, they are puerile. Ory's trombone playing, in novelty style, is much inferior to his later re-

corded work. Carey's cornet, like the trombone, is quite dated; but it shows a clear sense of hot intonation and ensemble playing, without anything extraordinary in the way of inspiration. The clarinet is weak.

Also on Hollywood is a record of "Steppin' High" and "Sheffield Blues", made by Reb Spikes with a pick-up band which he no longer remembers. Paul Howard, another of the old-time colored musicians on the Pacific Coast, made three records which appeared on Hollywood under the name of Harvey Brooks' Quality Four. These are "Mistreatin' Daddy -- Frankie And Johnny", Hollywood 1008; "If You'll Come Back -- Nobody's Sweetheart", 1021; and "Who Will Get It -- Down on The Farm", 1022. Personnel of this session, according to Dave Stuart, is L. Herriford, Paul Howard, saxes; Harvey Brooks, piano; H. "Tincan" Allen, drums.

THE BLUE RIBBON SYNCOPATORS

Personnel of the hitherto unidentified Blue Ribbon Syncopators, who recorded "Whale Dip" and "Blue Ribbon Blues" on Columbia, has been obtained by our Chicago correspondent John Steiner, who followed up a clue given him by drummer Norman Buster of Milwaukee's Club Moonglow and obtained the following information from Lloyd V. Plummer, Secretary of the Buffalo Musicians' Association, Local 533, A.F. of M.

"As I recall", Plummer writes "the band consisted of five pieces, and played at a night club known as Joe Neibert's Big House, just over the city line.

"The instrumentation was piano George West; sax Herbert Diemer; trumpet Harry Tate; banjo Gilbert Roberts; and drums Hurley Diemer. At a later date Rufus Buster, sax, played with the band; but I do not know whether he augmented or replaced one of the others.

"These men were all members of this Local; but to date the only one left in Buffalo is Herbert Diemer. He is somewhat hazy about the date of the engagement at the Big House, but thinks it was in 1924 and 1925.

"Harry Tate, trumpet, was the feature man of the band; I think Tate was also the leader. As near as I can find out the band was together only during the engagement at the one place, which was approximately one year, The only other record I know of made by them was "Blues In C# Minor" (?), written by Harry Tate. Tate is in New York, and still playing... Hurley Diemer spent ten years in France in various orchestras and is in Albany at present..."

SAM PRICE ON COW COW'S DECCAS

Sam B. Price, Texas blues pianist whose many records include a number of Decca blues accompaniments, played piano on four Decca sides by Cow Cow Davenport, he told collector Sid Stiber recently.

The records are "Railroad Blues -- I Ain't No Iceman" and "That'll Get It -- Don't You Loud Mouth Me", Decca 7462 and 7486 respectively. Cow Cow was vocalist only; besides Sam, the accompaniment features the fluegelhorn playing of Woody Herman's Joe Bishop. The fourth title mentioned, incidentally, is a variation of "Don't You Leave Me Here", an old blues recently recorded for General by Jelly Roll Morton.

SOLO ART NUMBERS DUPLICATED

Robert Stendahl of Valparaiso, Indiana, calls our attention to a duplication of record numbers on Dan Qualey's Solo Art label. Two records, Cripple Clarence Lofton's "Streamline Train" - "Had A Dream" and Meade Lux Lewis' "Deep Fives -- Blues De Lux" were issued with the same serial number, Solo Art 12-003.

Another duplication, which Mr Stendahl failed to notice, is Solo Art 12004. This number was used on Pete Johnson's "How Long -- Climbin' And Screamin'" as well as on the Meade Lux "Closin' Hour Blues -- Far Ago Blues".

These double issues need not

lead to much confusion. As Qualey explains them, the two Meade Lux Lewis records in question were private releases, which have been cut out and will not be available. The numbers 12003 and 12004, then, will always designate the Lofton and Johnson solos, respectively.

Another hitherto unmentioned point of interest to Solo Art collectors is that two different masters of Art Hodes' "South Side Shuffle" have been issued. These are 2198 and 2199, both released on Solo Art 12007; both are good, the 2198 perhaps better.

* * *

John Steiner lists five new Fats Waller accompaniments which have not, to our knowledge, been previously notated:

Paramount 12052, "Trixie Blues" (1473-1) -- "I Wish I could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate" (1468-1); vocal by Anna Jones, acc. by Thomas Waller, piano.

Victor 20771, "Beale St. Blues" -- "Sugar"; vocal by Alberta Hunter, acc. by Thomas Waller, organ.

Victor 21539, "I'm Going To See My Ma" (37574); vocal by Alberta Hunter, organ accompaniment not identified on label, but certainly Waller.

Victor 21062, "Florence", vocal by Juanita Stinette Chappelle, acc. by Thomas Waller organ; -- "Bye Bye Florence", vocal by Bert Howell, acc. by Thomas Waller, organ.

Banner 6043, "I've Got The Joogie Blues" (1010-2) - "Black Snake Blues" (1009-2); vocal by Maude Mills, piano accompaniment undoubtedly by Waller.

Four persons, Steiner remarks, have listened to the Victor 21539 and Banner 6043, and each identified Waller independently. In all the records listed, accompaniments are clear, and unmistakable.

* * *

LEROY SMITH RECORD PERSONNEL

The personnel of the Victor records by Leroy Smith's orchestra has been obtained by Herman Rosenberg from the veteran banjo and flute player Leroy Harris, Sr.:

John Long, violin and front; Frank Nelt, first trumpet; Charlie Gains, second trumpet; Pike Davis, third trumpet; Leroy Williams, trombone; Emerson (Geechy) Harper, alto sax, clarinet and oboe; Stanley Peters, tenor sax and bassoon; Harold Henson, alto sax, cello and string bass; Harry Brooks, piano; Sam Speede, banjo; Fred Peters, bass; --- drums.

Henson, who doubled on three instruments, was a better bass player than the regular man, according to Harris.

Harris also offers a collective personnel for Clarence Williams' Okeh and Columbia records: Ed Allen, trumpet; Arville Harris, Carmelo Jejo, or Socarras, clarinet; Ed Cuffee, trombone; Cyrus Sinclair, tuba; Floyd "Fat" Casey, washboard. Of course this line-up applies only to some of the Williams records.

* * *

Bill Love sends some little-known items of discography to this column from Nashville, Tennessee:

The Red Onion Jazz Babies' accompaniment for Josephine Beatty, Gennett 5626, also appears on Gennett 3044.

Fletcher Henderson's "Poplar St. Blues - Twelfth Street Rag" (Pathe 36214) also appears on Perfect 14-395 - under the name of the Southampton Society Orchestra!

A Duke Ellington coupling of "Saturday Night Function" (4064) --

PLEASE! Mention Jazz Information when you write to our advertisers.

"Doin' The Voom Voom" (4062) is on Romeo 1101.

The Louisiana Rhythm Kings' Vocalion 15710, "I Can't Give You Anything But Love", is backed by Ellington's "Jubilee Stomp".

* * *

DAVE NELSON AND THE KING'S MEN

Dave Nelson, trumpet player who worked with King Oliver during his New York period (and appears on many of Oliver's records on Victor), gave Herman Rosenberg the following personnel for his own three Victor sides under the name of "Dave Nelson and the King's Men":

Nelson, Melvin Herbert, trumpets; Wilbur De Paris, trombone; Buster Bailey, Glyn Pacque, Charlie Frazier, Wayman Carver, saxes; Sam Allen, piano; Arthur Taylor, guitar; Simon Marrero, bass; Gerald Hobson, drums.

Titles recorded were "I Ain't Got Nobody" and "When Day Is Done", Victor 22639, and "Some Of These Days", Victor 23039.

After listening to Nelson on "Some Of These Days", which also features a mess of Buster's clarinet, it's easy to believe that, as he says, Dave played the excellent cornet solo on Oliver's "Mule Face Blues".

* * *

Robert B. Sales of Louisville, Kentucky, writes that he had a talk with Rosy McHargue when Ted Weems played a one-nighter there recently. Rosy says he made "Breezin Along With The Breeze", Velvetone 20142, with the Seattle Harmony Kings, as well as several Victors with the same band, among which is "How Many Times", Victor 20133.

Bob also has a new Ma Rainey, with accompaniment by Lovie Austin's Serenaders: "Mean Papa, Turn Your Key" (1708), Paramount 12-097-A. The coupling is by Edmonia Henderson, "If You Sheba On Your Mama" (1693).

NOTICE

We have been fortunate enough to prevail upon Mr. Robert Quinlisk to write our projected column of reviews of classic jazz records, for as long as his other affairs will permit. Mr. Quinlisk missed his first deadline, but promises a column for the next issue.

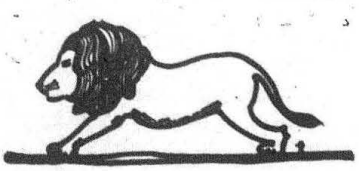
EDMOND HALL

(Continued from Page 12)

featured often in the Monday night jam sessions which James P. Johnson conducted at Cafe Society -- a new spot then -- in the Winter and Spring of 1939. A few months later Zutty Singleton picked Hall to play in the trio he led at Nick's. This job set his reputation with New Yorkers. He never doubled sax in the trio; just played that fine hot clarinet.

When Zutty left Nick's, Edmond moved over to Cafe Society, where Joe Sullivan was changing a listless white band into an enthusiastic mixed-color group. He recorded with Sullivan on Vocalion and Okeh, and in the incidental music for the film, "Fight For Life". He made some blues accompaniments for Ida Cox on Vocalion, the terrible W. C. Handy records on Varsity and a date with Lionel Hampton for Victor. All of these have nice points, none are sensationally good. The most prolific recording year of Hall's life ended, this Spring, with a date for the Decca album of New Orleans jazz. With Henry Allen, Zutty and other oldtimers, Hall made four sides which may well prove when issued, to be the best of his career.

Since the Sullivan job ended he hasn't been working steady. That's not unusual for a good small-band man these days; and Edmond uses his lay-off time practicing and improving that technique. You'll hear of him again in the Fall: and whatever he's doing, it'll be in a small band; and great clarinet.



READERS' COMMENTS

Youngstown, Ohio

To The Editor:

I am a record dealer here in Youngstown and I find Jazz Information unbelievably helpful to me in my business. With the help of your magazine, a number of young record collectors are becoming increasingly conscious of good jazz.

Here's wishing you all the success in the world.

Doris Reynolds

New York City

To The Editor:

I have just finished your first copy of the new "J. I.", and am enthusiastically enclosing one dollar for a four months subscription. It is by far the finest publication devoted to jazz, and your record review and collectors' column really put to shame similar attempts by your pseudo-jazz contemporaries.

Nathan Solomon.

P. S. I heartily endorse Ed Adams' letter for a column reviewing the great classics of the past.

New York City

To The Editor:

All serious followers of true jazz should be indebted to you for the wonderful job you have done thus far.

It was a rare pleasure to note, in your last issue, that the large advertisement which Commodore and Decca gave you had no effect on your appraisal of the merit of their records advertised. I may not always agree with what you say, but I respect the honesty and sincerity of your opinions. So long as you remain as uncommercial as you are at present, you can be assured of my continued support.

Harold Rabinowitz

Harrisburg, Pa.

To The Editor:

Let me congratulate you on the excellence of the scope and contents of your needed publication Jazz Information, and may it continue to grow in both size and circulation.

Robert Rhoads.

San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sirs:

At this time may I express my appreciation for the fine work J. I. is doing in the field of hot music. It is quite a relief to read about hot music, without wading through a mess of second rate sensationalism, leg art, and pictures of corny musicians with their pants rolled up, making funny faces. If you know what I mean, and I think you do. By all means keep up the good work.

Alvin Hipshman.

White Plains, N. Y.

To The Editor:

Heartiest congratulations on the new Jazz Information. Attractive, absorbing, authoritative and complete, it represents the gratifying result of a sincere effort.

Donald W. Palmer.

A CONTEST

WHAT SHOULD COLUMBIA REISSUE?

The Columbia Recording Corporation's series of reissues of famous hot jazz classics is to begin this Fall. In the opinion of the editors of Jazz Information, Columbia's catalogue of jazz records, when completed, should be a most impressive and useful tribute to the growth of interest in American jazz music.

Columbia will doubtless be guided by its own experts in determining which sides from its enormous catalogues will be released. Nevertheless, Jazz Information would like to know which records its readers, who represent the most influential body of jazz lovers, would like to see made available.

For this reason Jazz Information announces a poll, entirely unofficial and for our own edification and that of our readers only, on the following question:

WHICH TWENTY-FIVE RECORDS DO YOU WANT REISSUED?

There will be more than twenty-five Columbia reissues, of course. That number has been chosen merely for practical reasons. Any records from the old Columbia, Okeh, Vocalion, Brunswick, Harmony, Melotone, Perfect, Cameo, Banner, Regal, or other labels issued by Columbia and its subsidiaries, may be chosen.

Your list of the twenty-five you want most to see reissued, together with a letter giving the reasons for your selections, should be sent to the Reissue Poll Department, Jazz Information, 505 Fifth Avenue, New York City, before August 24. A compilation of the returns will be published in the September 6 issue.

The writer of the best letter, in the judgment of the editors, will receive a year's subscription to Jazz Information. The second and third best letters respectively will receive one six month, and one four month, subscription. Prizes may be taken as new subscriptions or renewals, or sent to another person you select.

All entries will become the property of Jazz Information, and the editors' decisions will be final. Members of our staff, of course, are not eligible.

JAZZ INFORMATION

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JAZZ ON THE AIR

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